DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 136 371 EA 009 282

AUTHOR Gordon, Vera Julia
TITLE Extra Curricular Programs--How to Survive in an Era of Austerity.
PUB DATE Jan 77
NOTE 5p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (61st, New Orleans, Louisiana, January 14-19, 1977); Not available in hard copy due to marginal legibility of original document

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Cocurricular Activities; *Cost Effectiveness; *Educational Policy; *Financial Support; Secondary Education

ABSTRACT

Extracurricular activities are vitally important to the life of students, the school itself, and the community. However, they can be expensive. These activities should be studied so that their role and importance are known and cost analyses should be conducted. The interested parties must be involved in the analyses and in implementing any changes that are made. (Author/MLF)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED136371

Vera Julia Gordon

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

EXTRA CURRICULAR PROGRAMS -

How to Survive in an Era of Austerity

Budgetary constraints are affecting schools throughout the country, but the effects on programs are different in each district, and even on different schools within a district. The solutions will also differ, but possible approaches to the problem are what we hope to present here. In some schools, the problem is not so much surviving in the extra-curricular areas, but in finding ways to keep academic classes which have very small registrations; many of the suggested approaches can be applied to this problem too.

First, let us consider what are usually called the extra-curricular areas. Athletics --- whether team or 'individual' sports; publications --- school newspaper, literary - art magazine, yearbooks, department magazines/newsletters; dramatic productions and variety shows; music - related activities: band, orchestra, chorus, concerts. The Student Government and its activities are, for the most part, extra-curricular. This means clubs, cheerleaders, marching teams, dances, faculty-student games, and G.O. sponsored activities such as visits to hospitals, nursing homes, toy collections, G.O. store, and a host of other projects. Senior activities are often extra-curricular and so also are honor societies, student peer tutoring and organized college visits. This is not, by any means, an all-inclusive list.

It is axiomatic that nothing is free, but all known costs must be studied before programs are changed. When it comes to an analysis of the costs of extra-curricular activities, probably the most apparent is additional financial compensation for regular and extra personnel: coaches, athletic officials, advisors' fees, but also payment for extra hours for grounds keepers, locker room attendants, custodial workers. Whether personnel are adults or students, if they are paid, that is a cost which must be known. There are also fees such as those for memberships in athletic leagues and scholastic press associations. There is also the cost of equipment such as balls, posts, markers, instruments and the cost of repairing and maintaining equipment. Uniforms cost money and there are their laundry/repair/maintenance costs. Towels --- whether cloth or paper --- must be considered and if non-disposable towels are used, there are laundry costs. Transportation costs --- drivers and gasoline especially --- must be allowed for. In the case of publications, printing costs are the major cost if material is sent out; if it is in-house printing, then paper, the machines, ink and staff time are involved. The cost of postage can be a major problem for publications wishing to exchange with others, but it affects other extra-curricular activities too. Publicity costs money, whether it's posters or paid advertising. Tickets and programs have costs. Membership pins, awards, and trophies are part and parcel of many activities; sometimes members' pins are paid for by the members, through fees; in some communities students are not supposed to be asked to pay for anything so the costs fall to the school. Finally, one needs to remember the costs of building use: heat, electricity, telephone service, security. These have in the past been more or less ignored. Now they are being questioned --- and charged for.

When decisions have to be made, the facts are basic, but the decision-makers or, more properly, the advisers to the decision-makers are essential too. Different points of view are essential for fact-finding and for weighing all factors. The most frequently involved are the administrators of the district or school and staff members --- both those directly involved in extra-curricular activities and those who are not. Representative students are vital, for if changes are made without their involvement there can be misunderstanding and resentment. Parents need input; this is usually through the Parent-Teachers Association, but if there are groups such as "Football Fathers" they should be included. In some schools, or for some activities, input from the community as a whole is very important. The decision-makers (advisers) have a dual role, of course. Not only do they help make the

EA 009 282

choices, but they also help explain changes and the reasons for them to their "constituents."

Whether one program, or many, is under analysis, it is necessary to consider the program itself and why it exists: does it involve cognitive, affective or psychomotor learning? Does it provide a social outlet? What purposes does it fulfill in the life of the students, the school, the community? How important is it to each group? For example, the same basketball program has different meaning for the team members and for the general public. Can the skills involved be learned or used in other ways? The interconnections of programs cannot be ignored. When decisions for change are being weighed, it is important to keep a continuum in mind. It is rare that the choice is "keep as is" versus "eliminate in its entirety;" the range is more likely "keep, reduce, change, consolidate, incorporate, rotate, eliminate." It is important that when changes are made, that specific changes be clear; if it is keep but reduce the cost, then the areas of cost cut need to be clear in advance.

Let us consider the possible sources of financial support which are available to one degree or another. First, there is the direct support for the overall school budget and/or student activities by the District Board of Education or by the State. (Any grants from the State or Federal governments in the extra-curricular area are not unlikely; peer-tutoring is one exception.) The next most likely support source is the Student Government. This is basically student dues. Many schools are finding this a weakening income source. Some activities are considered self-supporting or nearly so: Ticket sales or subscription sales cover costs. Whether all costs are covered needs to be studied, however, because as I mentioned before, there are many expenses not always considered but which are part of a program.

Then there is fund-raising, amateur or professional. This can be a minor matter of a one hour cake sale or can involve a whole school or community, take a great deal of time and, if successful, raise thousands of dollars. We are familiar with the gamut of sales --- before school, during activity periods, at dismissal: cakes and cookies, pickles, contributed items for flea markets or white elephant tables, student-made craft and food items ; usually the work of the art and home economics and industrial arts classes. Before any school or activity-sponsor begins any fund-raising there should be clearly understood --- and enforceable --- regulations about what may be sold, where, when and where the money goes. A master calendar is a good idea so that conflicts will be avoided. Many schools do not permit sales fund-raising of food items in the cafeteria. Everyone involved needs to know --- in advance --- what costs come "off the top." For example, are items contributed or, whether made in school or elsewhere, must the costs of the materials be paid for from whatever is raised? I recommend the system whereby all money collected, by whatever in-school group, goes to the G.O. (or whatever name given to the student government in the school) and is later appropriated by the G.O. to the groups needing funds --- with the basic understanding that a group will always get as an appropriation the amount which it has raised.

If the Parents Association is the sponsor of fund raising, the money goes to them and they decide its use.

We are all aware of the many fund-raising organizations which have programs for elementary and secondary school fund raising. We have only to walk through the Exhibit Hall at Rivergate to see that such fund-raising is much used. Among the items which are sold, with the school keeping a certain percentage of the money, are candy, cookies, magazines, stationery, candles, cosmetics, ball point pens.

The quality of the goods varies as does the quality of the 'promotional packages' which are offered: lists, class envelopes, advance delivery of the item, prizes for high sellers. A sales-fund raising effort can be a major project and affect a school's "image" in the community --- for good or ill. I will return to that point shortly.

There are also current projects whereby equipment, especially sports equipment, can be obtained by a school through proof of purchase of certain products. Some boards of education have prohibited schools from involving themselves in this as they feel it could be an apparent endorsement of a product or a pressuring for purchases.

Then there are various forms of direct appeal. The Board of Education may ask for funds, or equipment for programs; the school may appeal; advisors, coaches, department heads may ask; Parents' Associations may write. The appeal may be very general or directed to a certain group such as parents, local businesses, alumni, parents of team members, community leaders. It may ask for money, donations of equipment --- specified or not, for sponsorship of a club or team (uniforms, for example, or transportation for a team to play at another school) or for publicity. A separate corporation of "Friends of ....." may even be established; in the latter situation there needs to be an awareness of possible conflict of interest. When school groups appeal, as when they have sales, there needs to be authorization, coordination, and accountability for funds raised.

What <u>are</u> some of the points to consider in any form of fund raising? Perhaps the most obvious is, who collects the money, when, and where does it go? Many educators are rather unsophisticated about this, and learn the hard way that receipts and strict financial accounting must be built into programs. The physical security of the money collected is important. Does it go into a safe? When? Where? Who counts the money and cross checks that receipt numbers tally when there is a promotional activity? Most of us have known of instances in some - other - school in which goods were ordered by a patron, the money collected by a student, but the goods not delivered by the student. It is an unfortunate fact of school life that a single instance of this kind can cast a shadow over a whole project.

Beyond the monetary issue there are others. Is the fund raising project --- major or minor --- educationally wise? Does everyone know why there is a drive and where the money will go? May parents, students, and community members feel pressure to purchase items which they really don't need, or can't even afford. Pressure of this type can be felt, even when there was no such intention on the part of the sponsor. If the community becomes antagonistic, the whole project becomes counter-productive, and future appeals are jeopardized. Are the time involvement and the staff involvement worth it in terms of the monetary return? As I mentioned before, does the school appear to be endorsing a particular product?

Fund raising is one approach. With it, or in some cases instead of it, is the cutting of costs. The first part of any cost <u>cutting</u> is cost <u>consciousness</u>. Earlier I mentioned analysis of apparent and hidden costs. The awareness of these costs is essential for the administration, the advisers, and the students.

My colleague will present the ways in which extra-curricular programs can become co-curricular. That saves many costs especially in the area of extra compensation but there are still expenses --- and expenses which can be cut.

EXTRA CURRICULAR PROGRAMS - How to Survive in an Era of Austerity (cont'd from page 3)

For example, uniforms. Are they needed? Can they be simplified? Can parts be changed so that items of ordinary stock clothing are involved? Are new uniforms needed as often? Can parts of the uniforms be made by classes in the school, as a valid educational project? There is still a cost, of course, in materials and time. Can some be made at home, without being an imposition on the family?

Are there membership pins? Are they needed? Can they be obtained more cheaply elsewhere in their present style? Would another style be cheaper and as effective? If students buy the pins, parents may resent the costs, but have been reluctant to mention it.

Are there trophies and awards? Praise and recognition are very important for students, parents, and the community, but the form may change. Bids can be sought to cut costs, smaller trophies are possible, and appropriate pins or certificates can be considered. These can sometimes be printed in-house, or in another school in the area.

Do one or more activities have separate telephone lines? Is the cost worth the convenience of making calls when the switchboard is not open? Are all calls really business calls? Are telephone locks in place when the office is not used? Are all calls (or only non-local calls) logged as made?

Publications can cut costs: fewer issues, fewer pages, more advertisements, photo-offset instead of "hot type," in-house printing, fewer color pages in magazines and yearbooks, elimination of printers' charges for corrections and other matters by strict adherence to deadlines and checking of copy before it is sent. Getting bids from several printers is also worthwhile. Some high schools no longer have a paper, but they have a page in a local newspaper instead. Some school papers, on the other hand, have become combination school and local papers and thereby increase revenue and circulation. As most of you are aware, the costs in scholastic newspaper printing are just about the same for 300 copies or 3,000 so that cutting the press run saves very little money --- if any.

When activities become co-curricular, there may need to be other cuts, especially if only a relatively small number of students are involved. A journalism class might be a combined junior and senior group, with students taking it for one year, or for two years because topics and tasks would be rotated. This rotational/combination technique can be used also with creative writing, theatre arts, business machines and in other areas.

In Athletics, we all know that some sports are "fall term" and some are "spring term." It may be that students in two "fall term" sports could be in the same class, or one "fall term" sport will be offered every other year, alternating with another. If that is done, intramural competition is still possible; if two or more schools can coordinate their course offerings, inter-scholastic competition is still possible.

In summary, we need to remember that what we have called extra-curricular activities are vitally important to the life of students, the school itself, and the community. However, they can be expensive. That does not mean they should be eliminated. What it does mean is that they should be studied so that their role and importance are really known; they should be cost-analyzed. If changes are made, they should not be precipitate and may not need to be wholesale; the interested parties must be involved in the analyses and in implementing the changes. Most important, maintaining extra-curricular activities in this era of austerity is possible, if done with thought.